

IGNITION

DAVID BUTLER

VÉRONIQUE CHAGNON-CÔTÉ

EUGÉNIE CLICHE

DAYNA DANGER

ROSIKA DESNOYERS

JINYOUNG KIM

SANDRA SMIRLE

BOGDAN STOICA

ANDREA SZILASI



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Sandra Smirle, *Outlook*, 2012. Video still. Courtesy the artist.

WAYS OF THINKING

Ways of Thinking is designed for anyone interested in exploring contemporary art and its exhibition framework. It offers succinct and synthesized information on the exhibition's concept, the artists and the works featured. For the complete version of *Ways of Thinking* that includes bibliographic references, please visit our website: www.ellengallery.concordia.ca/2006/en/

IGNITION is an annual, curated exhibition presenting recent work by students in Concordia University's Graduate Studio Arts program and Humanities doctoral program. It provides an up-and-coming generation of artists with a unique opportunity to present ambitious, interdisciplinary works in the professional context of a gallery with a national and international profile. Students work directly with Gallery staff to produce an exhibition that places an emphasis on critical, innovative, and experimental work engaging in an exploration and consideration of diverse media and practices. This year, **IGNITION** features artists exploring a wide array of topics through an equally wide range of media – from painting, sculpture, and embroidery to photography, video, and installation.

The work featured in this edition of **IGNITION** was selected by jake moore, Director of the FOFA Gallery, and Michèle Thériault, Director of the Ellen Art Gallery.

Eugénie Cliche creates unconventional scenarios that walk the line between playful and disturbing in what she terms *photobroderies* where she embroiders over Photoshopped digital images of family members. In her photographic series, *Bad Girls, Dayna Danger* reworks archetypal female figures often linked to scandal and shame as empowered protagonists who boldly embrace their sexuality and stray from society's mores. **Rosika Desnoyers** delves into the material history of needlepoint, looking at this often disregarded amateur art form that was once widely practiced by many European women.

Jinyoung Kim photographs her father's return to South Korea after over a decade's absence, posing him against various backdrops that subtly hint at the intensity of the experience. In his multifaceted project *Kaval, Bogdan Stoica* mines the traditional Eastern European flute as a complex metaphor for immigrant experience and cultural identity in flux.

Drawing from artist Robert Smithson's text, *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey*, about a trip taken from Manhattan to the suburbs in 1966, **David Butler** uses Google Street View to retrace this iconic voyage, morphing elements of time and space. Using the gaze as a focal point in her video, *Outlook*, **Sandra Smirle** explores the impact of mediated reality in an era of constant surveillance.

Andrea Szilasi juxtaposes photographs of weight-training equipment with paintings cut and pasted from Western art history books, generating unexpected environments from these differing aesthetics and forms. **Véronique Chagnon-Côté** builds on the landscape painting genre, depicting lush gardens and foliage that draw attention to the human desire to control and contain the natural world.

DAVID BUTLER

The Dead Man Drifted Along in the Breeze, 2013. Video, 11 min.

Taking the ruin as theme, David Butler explores material culture as it is transformed by emerging digital technologies. Drawing on the methodologies of architecture, museology, and archaeology, his work examines the impact of digitization on our understanding of history and how we relate to the physical world around us.

The Dead Man Drifted Along in the Breeze presents a re-performance of Robert Smithson's walk, *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey* through the technology of Google Street View; an uncanny landscape of stitched and stretched images with "lines the size of streets, and squares and blocks the size of buildings".¹

EXPLORE

- the ways in which this work addresses the work of artist Robert Smithson;
- the origin and status of the image and why these are important considerations in this work.

VÉRONIQUE CHAGNON-CÔTÉ

Les bois, 2013. *Le feu*, 2012. *Feuillage III*, 2013. *Feuillage II*, 2012. *L'arbre*, 2012. Acrylic on canvas

My paintings are an exploration of space where several pictorial elements are combined through

multiple layering of matter. This paint is constructed: lines, tints, angles and vanishing points are superimposed to form imaginary spaces. They form obscure and utopian landscapes, at once interior and exterior, where nature meets structure, walls, and openness. Ideas of construction and deconstruction in painting, of multiple spaces and transformation, are themes that continually reoccur in my work.

This series focuses on the idea of the garden as a site belonging to nature and to humans. The garden is a closed space, an arrangement, a structure where humans choose to organize nature. "... trees are cut along the edge of wild forests, they form a protective hedge that half belongs to the wilderness, and is already half way to taking on human form."²

EXPLORE

- how this work explores space and landscape;
- notions of construction and deconstruction.

EUGÉNIE CLICHE

L'arche, 2012. Ten embroideries, cotton thread on linen

For the past ten years, I have constructed a world of unrestrained imagery that merges performance, cinematography, photography and embroidery. Combining playfulness, the ridiculous, irony and pathos with violence, my work references cinematography as well as mass culture and collective memory. The subversion of these selected identities creates a stance that ensnares the viewer. This machination assimilates time and trends by conjuring stories behind the façade, and by showing the secrets behind the icon.

In the embroideries comprising the body of work entitled *L'arche*, a narrative unfolds suggesting unusual stories of which the viewer becomes the author. These stories are inspired by the bonds of brotherhood, the hierarchy existing within a family, and individual personalities.

EXPLORE

- the ways in which the artist makes use of narrative;
- embroidery as a medium and how it contributes to the development of narrative in this work.

DAYNA DANGER

Bad Girls, 2009-ongoing. *The Outlander*, 2011. *Pandora*, 2011. *Derby Girls*, 2011. Chromogenic prints

I work with digital photography, sculpture, installation, and performance to reinterpret history and traditions. My interests include patriarchy, feminism, religion, gender, fetishism, and animalia, among others. Digital photography informs my work. Through digital editing, I subvert the notion of truth in the photograph to create an alternative truth, a pluralistic female narrative. Ease of access to this medium affords me the opportunity to reinterpret the male dominated genres of historical painting and photography.

My Catholic upbringing has impressed upon me ideas about what acceptable women are, how they act, what they look like, and how they are portrayed. By referencing the Renaissance and the genre of history painting, I create mythological and allegorical images of women throughout history, with

a rebellious, sexual twist. These women fascinate me because their stories cast them as "bad girls". My images ask the viewer to consider why the women I portray might be perceived as "bad" or malfeasant? The use of allegorical stories and myths allow me to present archetypal female characters throughout history that advance a new historical image, one in which the female is empowered and in control.

EXPLORE

- the types of images that serve as references for this work;
- the kinds of questions that are raised about representation in this work and the ways in which they are raised.

ROSIKA DESNOYERS

Excerpt from a micro-archive, c.1750-the present. Mixed media

Interdisciplinary and developed within an art practice premised on the use and understanding of pictorial embroidery, my doctoral work investigates the emergence of Berlin work. This includes the creation of a micro-archive of research-related materials, artefacts and artworks. Doctoral work has been a means for me to develop an art practice that incorporates a reflexive critique of its own making and of the disciplinary regimes of contemporary research creation.

My thesis operates as a genealogical investigation of a specific cultural practice that is located in the interplay of various historical forces and that defines needlepoint as an object of discourse. It provides an unprecedented view of needlepoint as a practice suspended between historically specific and temporally sedimented disciplinary gazes. *Fragments from a micro-archive* draws on my doctoral research.

EXPLORE

- the role that needlepoint plays in this work and how it is examined as a practice;
- the notion of the archive and how it functions in this work.

JINYOUNG KIM

The Fathers in Sanctuary, 2012. *The Playground*, 2012. *The Playground II*, 2012. *Hibiscus and Bridge*, 2012. Chromogenic prints

Onion, 2013. Inkjet print

My father returned to South Korea briefly in the summer of 2011, to visit his parents and relatives for the first time since his emigration to Canada. I accompanied him in this reunion process. Every hour was intensely charged with emotion, expectation, and sense of absolution and yet each day passed like any other. Through portraits of him as the different men that he has been during my life, as well as the men he has been in the context of his place of birth, his psychological anchor, *The Fathers in Sanctuary* represents the significance of this particular experience over two generations of my father's life.

Through the implied action of reconstructing an onion, by stitching the unravelled skins back together, *Onion* addresses the mourning of loss and the process of rejuvenation.

EXPLORE

- the artist's investigation of the relationship between immigration and identity;

– the visual language used by this artist.

SANDRA SMIRLE

Outlook, 2012. Video, 26 min. 13 sec.

My current work builds on ideas around surveillance, dataveillance and a 'viewer society', in which fear of the loss of personal privacy articulates with perceptions of enhanced security. Public and participatory surveillance – less technology, more a way of seeing – within our everyday contemporary culture can render the consumable controllable and the protective empowering.

Outlook is a 25-minute video document: the mapping of an intersection in my daughter's life at age ten. It is composed of five separate video portraits. For each of these, M sat for two five-minute periods, alone in a room with a timer, once being watched by the camera and then again while watching the live feed. The result is an interplay of conscious and unconscious, a dialogue with herself, simultaneously seeing and being seen.

EXPLORE

- the various elements that constitute this work and the roles that each one of them plays;
- notions of the gaze and the ways in which they are embodied in this work.

BOGDAN STOICA

Kaval, 2012-2013.

Untitled, 2012. *Untitled*, 2012. *Untitled*, 2012. Inkjet prints

Untitled, 2012-2013. *Untitled*, 2012-2013. Wood

Five Songs for Kaval, 2012. Audio recording, 10 min.

Shepherd, 2008. Video, 2 min. 30 sec.

Bogdan Stoica's work focuses primarily on questions of cultural change and the inevitable losses experienced in one's identity when one's environment is transformed. Stoica's work deals with both the desire to extract oneself from one's actual cultural situation, and also with the inability of certain cultural elements to resist change.

The project *Kaval* is an "ode" to a nearly extinct musical instrument, an ancient shepherd flute. For the past two thousand years, the instrument has traveled from Asia to Eastern Europe and has adapted to the multitude of cultures that embraced it. Through photography, video, and sound, its universe has been reinterpreted once more.

EXPLORE

- cultural identity and its evolution and how reference is made to these in this work;
- sound and its contribution to *Kaval*.

ANDREA SZILASI

Squat Cage (black and white), 2013. Digital print, paper, Polaroid photograph

StairMaster, 2013. Digital print, page from book

Squat Cage (with Vasarely and opera), 2013. Digital print, page from book

I am fascinated by the representation of the human body in the photographic medium. In particular how our interpretation of a human being is constituted by the formal conventions inherent to each genre of representation. I alternate between

taking my own photographs and making collages using found images. Over the years I have made collages that recombine images from a range of sources so as to "make strange" the original meaning of the photograph. I have explored genres ranging from dramatically lit black and white 1950's studio portraits to warm-toned, soft-focus, colour centerfolds.

For *IGNITION* I am presenting three recent collages that combine photographs of Atlantis weight training equipment with small photos, collages, and found images from art history books. I am working with the machines as geometric forms that encase or support a figure carrying out a mechanical motion. The rudimentary collage technique that I employ calls attention to the photograph as a material object and to the deliberate joining of unrelated worlds.

EXPLORE

- representation and the human body and the ways in which this work explores these;
- this artist's use of collage and found imagery.

Notes

1. Robert Smithson, *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey*, The Writings of Robert Smithson, ed. Nancy Holt, 1979 ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1979) 56.

2. Translation of an excerpt from Anne Cauquelin. *L'invention du paysage*. (Paris: PUF; Quadrige, 2000) 118.

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